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S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

In the Parish Church of St. JAMES's,
Westminster,

On THURSDAY, April 18, 1771,

Before HIS GRACE

AUGUSTUS HENRY, Duke of
Grafton,

P R E S I D E N T,

The VICE PRESIDENTS, the TREASURER,
AND

G O V E R N O R S,

OF THE

H O S P I T A L S

FOR THE

SMALL-POX and INOCULATION,

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING.

By the Honourable and Reverend ~~the~~ JAMES YORKE
D E A N of L I N C O L N. K

And Published at their REQUEST.

L O N D O N :

Printed by W. WOODFALL, No. 6, Silver-street, White-Friars.

M,DCC,LXXI.

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In the Parish Church of St. James's,

W. Jennings,

On Thursday, April 18, 1771.

Before His Grace

AUGUSTUS HENRY, Duke of

Gloucester,

P R E S I D E N T,

The Vice President, the Treasurer,

AND

G O V E R N O R S,



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MDCCLXXI.

MATTHEW chap. x. *part of the viiith*
verse.

Heal the Sick—freely you have received, freely give.

THE internal evidences of the Gospel are so various and engaging, that every considerate and unprejudiced mind cannot but find it's attention awakened to the cause and occasion of the publication of it, as well as invited to examine upon what collateral proofs are founded facts so extraordinary, and doctrines so interesting. With this favourable introduction, supported by every page of the accounts transmitted to us of it's first establishment, it finds a ready admission into the heart, fixes itself strongly there, and disposes the understanding to engage in the important discussion with candour and complacency. It appears to be the natural and regular method of subduing
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and cultivating this soil, which ought to be prepared for the reception of a good Seed, and which will not fail to reward the honest and industrious Labourer with a plentiful and vigorous Crop.

Every branch of science has its peculiar charms and attractions, which operate with the greatest force on the minds of its disciples. In this respect Christianity excels every other. To dispose us for the excellent lessons it abounds with, and to attend to its awful and sacred truths, it founds that Edifice, the corner stone of which is Faith in Christ, on these solid principles, the love of God and Man; and hence deduces every virtue, every attainment, which may be of importance to our present or future happiness. The benevolent affections thus drawn over to its party, we cannot avoid being solicitous after information on the nature of that doctrine which carries with it so favourable an appearance; and as we advance in the enquiry, the scheme and conduct of it evidently prove themselves so wise and merciful, that not only our reason is convinced, and faith excited, but also our thankfulness and gratitude are exalted to the highest pitch.

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That the *End of the Commandment is Charity*,* diffused through every circumstance of social intercourse, which neither makes nor leaves one Enemy, ought to be the main inducement to draw men to the practice of it. Had these cords of rational conviction of its intimate union with the happiness of our nature, been judiciously managed by some of the early preachers of Christianity; or even in more enlightened ages; the progress of this best gift of our bountiful Creator would have met with fewer interruptions. On the contrary, neither the spirit nor the letter of it were always fairly represented, or clearly understood; and therefore it has too often happened, that neither Believer nor Infidel were enlightened, or improved.

But a just attention to the practice of our Lord and his Disciples, in this instance, would have taught Men a wiser conduct. All compulsory measures, most points of mere speculation, would have received no countenance from their examples; and a previous persuasion of the perfect simplicity and benevolent tendency which animates our religion, might have prevented much of the danger they contended against, and secured a better disposition towards

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* *Tim.* 1. 5.

it. Such was the way it pleased our Saviour to pursue on its original establishment. He recommended his divine precepts, unincumbered with useless pomp, or superstitious practice, and on every occasion explained that character of mildness and good nature which distinguished and adorned them.

In his assiduous labours to amend and remove every evil passion of the mind, every grievous bodily disorder; his wisdom, his power, and his goodness were exerted wherever he came; and the brightest pattern, and the highest instruction set before his Followers. A strict observance of this method was warmly recommended to the first Assistants he employed for the same charitable purpose. They were ordained to publish the gracious news in every region of Judea, that the series of prophecy regularly pursued, and gradually displayed from the fall to the captivity, was now compleated; that the expectation of that country, *the desire of all nations* * was then an inhabitant of the earth in human shape, effecting his salutary purposes, reconciling those who would dedicate themselves to his service, to the favour of God, and engaging them to brotherly affection for

for each other. These interesting particulars were by his express command to be made known with that meekness so eminently displayed by him, and with that benevolence which would prove the sincerity of the Teachers, and gain the confidence of all who were worthy to receive them. All vehemence of zeal, and every artifice that might betray the least symptom of interested or personal regards, were prevented; The conduct prescribed to them was such, as at the same time that it enabled them to act with resolution, furnished ample testimony to the truth of what they uttered, and undeniably evinced the object of their mission to be of the most generous nature.

The passage from whence my text is taken, is a portion of those solemn instructions which were delivered to the Apostles selected by our Lord upon the first occasion of this kind. He appointed twelve of them his Fellow-labourers in the great work of preaching. That they might do it with efficacy he points out the doctrines upon which they were to lay peculiar stress; that God was now about to establish the kingdom of the Messiah, wherein he will be worshipped *in Spirit and in truth*; and instead of external rites and ceremonies will accept

accept of nothing but sincere repentance and obedience. This he tells them must be delivered in a manner the least offensive to the Jews; to whose obstinacy and errors he was indulgent to the last. For this cause they were at present to avoid any intercourse with the Samaritans, their constant enemies; nor to communicate to them this momentous business. The arguments and proofs of the authority with which he now invests them, flow from the same benevolent principle which dictated his discourses, and produced his miracles; they were empowered to cast out evil spirits, and heal every disease. He closes these instructions with reminding them how freely and bountifully this mercy had been imparted to them; and therefore admonishes them to express their thankfulness, by as free and disinterested a communication of them to others. *Heal the Sick—freely you have received, freely give.*

This precept, upon the same generous motive, well deserves our serious attention. It was of great importance in the infancy of the Gospel for the reasons pointed out, and must be always necessary during its establishment. If at that period the infirmities of mankind were chosen as a proper means of illustrating our Lord's divine original

original, and also of proving his unbounded compassion for the human race, must it not be the duty of every faithful servant of that master, to cultivate the same disposition, and to support his religion, by those methods which at first introduced it to the world? The least reflection on our social make will convince us that we are quite incapable of mere self-enjoyment. Our faculties and talents, as they confer the means of assisting each other, so they manifestly point out the intentions of the gracious author of them. All the world is made subject to wants and distresses, and seldom has one been found so wretched, as not in some instance, some moment of his life, to have been moved with Compassion for his fellow-creature. Our common condition in life, exposed to evils both within and without, which can neither be prevented nor redressed, pleads strongly in behalf of mutual good-will. All must feel so much infirmity of mind and body, as to convince us that it is our duty to cultivate this principle; for, without it, how miserable would be the condition of Humanity!

Our rank in the creation, and that freedom of thought and action which dignifies and distinguishes our nature, is a privilege peculiar to us, and the foundation of innumerable others, if not abused.

abused. But this cup of blessing imparted to us, is dashed with many bitter medicinal ingredients, which much alloy its relish, and require patience and circumspection to correct. These, however, carry no proofs of our being considered as unworthy the protection of heaven; nor that they derive their source from any Evil Being able to controul the operations of the Good One. On the contrary, many satisfactory causes may be assigned for their permission, and every comfort, every help that reason, religion, or humanity, can furnish, is obvious to those who need them. From reason we learn to consider our existence, even thus incumbered, as far preferable to non-existence, as by it we are capable of great enjoyments; that our Creator is all goodness, as well as all powerful, and consequently our happiness must and will be his ultimate design; that some gracious, though, at present, inscrutable purpose will be answered by this peculiar state of sorrow; and moreover, upon a fair examination of the matter, it would appear, that if none but such difficulties as those which no human foresight or prudence could avoid oppressed us, our trial would be much less severe. In aid of this, religion's voice instructs us to depend on God's protection, and more clearly demonstrates to us
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his nature and attributes as the surest ground of confidence. It points us to a futurity in prospect which will amply reward us for every virtuous struggle. In the mean time her guidance trains us in our duty, and forcibly displays to us the proper objects of our faith and hope. Thus armed, we might encounter every foe to our peace. With reason and religion to support us, what avails it, though, like holy Job, we were overwhelmed with misfortunes, and beset with the subtlest temptations; our triumph would be like his, and our reward superior. For we should, to our inexpressible comfort, be convinced, that *our Redeemer liveth, and that we shall abide for ever in his presence, with whom there is fulness of joy, and sit down at his right hand, in joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* * But abundant as these comforts are, and invulnerable as they might render us to the arrows of pain and death, we have yet another ally to call in to our assistance, ready prepared and disposed. This is to be sought for in ourselves, from that ability freely bestowed upon us to minister to each other's wants, and that conviction arising from experience of the necessity of mutual help. No disposition seems so con-

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* Job. 19. 25.

genial to the heart of man as this, none has more frequent demands upon it, none has been cultivated with greater care by the laws of God and man; it adorns and improves every situation, and spreads a grace over every circumstance of character. Our great distinction from the inferior orders arises from this sympathetic sensibility, and is denominated humanity, as appropriated to our make. The temper which is deeply tinged with it, partakes of the divine nature, and co-operates with it in the principal object of its care. The wants and miseries which afflict our nature oblige us often to have recourse to others for comfort and relief; and there are few who cannot contribute something. All should be willing to exert their talent on such occasions, and each should measure their assistance by the extent of the power of that entrusted to him. If this has been bestowed upon us with an unsparing hand, we should consider it as a deposit of which we are to render an account. We are not to suffer it to be insignificant and useless, nor to employ it merely on selfish purposes, but to direct the effects of it in such a manner, as will be of the most extensive benefit. Besides, we should consider that God has made us of one blood, and that so near

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a connection is a constant demand upon us of mutual assistance. To afford this assistance is most consistent with our nature, to refuse it is violence done to it. We enjoy the benefit of society as we are made for it, and are bound to preserve and improve it for general as well as partial advantages. We are obliged too, by peculiar ties of relation in a moral sense, as children of the same common father, and still nearer, as brethren in Christ Jesus, for *now there is but one Body, one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling*; * and undoubtedly genuine vital Christianity entirely overthrows and confounds all uncharitableness, and enjoins the most vigorous exertion of all our social affections. It represents to us the amiable pattern of them all united in the heavenly example of our Lord and Saviour; nor are we worthy to be denominated Christians, unless we distinguish ourselves by such fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy. Universal love, disinterested kindness is the truest image of him who is the purity of love itself; who is all-powerful, all-knowing, unchangeable goodness, and dwelling in us; is the spirit of God infused into us; is the spirit of a heavenly life. This has the preference of

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* *Ephes. iv. 3.*

all spiritual graces ; it is the bond of Christian and social union, and animates, preserves, and perfects the whole and every part.

Our Creator has given us all things freely to enjoy, but in different proportions. Such an inequality suits with this transitory state of probation. Some are solicited by ease and affluence, whilst others are tempted by poverty and sickness. This is a constant lesson to us, of the imperfection of every thing here below, and proves the weakness and dependance of our situation. If the latter is our unhappy portion, we must submit to it as the will of our Heavenly Father, be thankful for the prospect he vouchsafes to us of better days, and with chearfulness and gratitude accept the comfort and compassion administered to us by our fellow-creature. But should our lot be cast upon a fairer soil, and our temptations of the more engaging kind, our duties alter, and the demands of others are proportionably increased. The defects of the mind require their particular attention ; but the causes of them are intricate, difficult to manage, and, by vicious indulgence, become almost a second nature in us. To correct and remove these is in the power of few, of none indeed so much as of the patient himself, who is too apt, unhappily,

happily, to be fond of his disorder, and unwilling to part with it. With regard to the evils of the body, many are the ways of counteracting them, or at least of keeping them within some bounds, and of enabling persons to support them tolerably. The affluent can secure to themselves every assistance of this sort; but to the poor, these evils are heightened by the want of every thing. It is for this reason that charitable munificence has provided houses for their reception, under various maladies, where proper care is taken of them, and from whence, with the blessing of God, they are restored to their families, and enabled to pursue their honest occupations. In no respect has the influence of Christianity on the happiness of mankind in this world, proved itself more forcibly than in this particular. The example it has set before us, and the benevolent spirit it breathes, have inspired its professors with ardour to contribute to every proposal which holds out such benefits. No country, amongst those enlightened by the Gospel, has been more active in the encouragement of them than our own. Almost in every large district of it, receptacles for these purposes have been provided. In this commercial, populous, and wealthy city, many and fruitful are the

the branches that have spread from this salutary root. All undoubtedly well intended, most of them of considerable importance, none without its use. The care and attention paid to them, and the expence bestowed upon them, is fully adequate to their demands, and to the sources of opulence and benevolence from whence they are supplied. Few objections but such as are easily obviated can be urged, either to their design or management. Though it is greatly to be wished, that their number may not make the continuance of some at least precarious, but that all may thrive together to the general advantage, and derive upon us the blessing and protection of Heaven.

Within these few years a fresh instance has appeared of the public attention to the necessities of the industrious poor; that main bulwark of our state. It is designed to take under its shelter those who are afflicted with that noisome and pestilential illness, from which scarce any constitution is secure, and which, if neglected or ill-managed, is frequently fatal; and where it is not so, sometimes produces incurable disorders. Its ravage is often widely destructive; and most families within its reach have dreadful apprehensions of it. The poison is so noxious and

and malignant, that though many pity, yet few dare administer relief. The poor man's cottage is at this distressful season particularly shunned; because the straitness of it adds peculiar acrimony to the disorder, and often exhibits the shocking spectacle of a numerous family sinking under the burden. 'Till this hospital was established for the reception of such aggravated distress, the sufferers under it were left to casual bounty for relief; but more commonly to perish in hopeless anguish. From reasons of necessary prudence no other would receive them; and thus the situation that had the largest claim to our compassion was the least provided with it.

Such an improvement to the copious succour in other respects so unsparingly bestowed, was originally suggested by a design to encourage the useful Practice of Innoculation. The good providence of God, ever watchful to produce repeated instances of mercy out of means the least likely, spread from distant and less enlightened countries into this, that efficacious and surprising method of abating the virulence of this disorder, and of communicating it to the habit under such restrictions as from a much dreaded foe to our nature, renders it almost the sport of every

every period of our lives. On its first appearance many were the difficulties it had to struggle with. The extraordinary nature, and the novelty of it, raised endless scruples from its supposed impiety and hazard. But these have been so forcibly and fully answered, and are at length so generally got over, that our danger seems at present from the opposite quarter. It is become so familiar to us, that its advocates and practitioners, from different motives, have prejudiced the opinions of many, otherwise disposed to favour it. The plain and easy process, and the very probable success attending it, has of course furnished innumerable patients, and consequently many undertakers; and these very unequally qualified. From hence great inconveniencies have followed. This disorder, heretofore local, and confined to accidents of season, or contingent causes, and therefore easier to be shunned, is now perpetuated in every quarter, and rendered almost unavoidable. By this means the question is become more equivocal, as may appear from the Bills of Mortality, as to the numbers which upon the whole are preserved to the community, since it has been conducted in a manner so licentious as to spread and continue the infection. For many are under a necessity
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of inoculating in spite of every constitutional reluctance, and in contradiction to insuperable doubts of its propriety; or else must debar themselves from the freedom necessary to their affairs and health. This is undoubtedly a grievous hardship, and ought, as much as possible, to be attended to. The Magistrate has frequently interposed as far as it has fallen within the limits of authority. He has indeed been obliged to do so in places of public resort; or otherwise, the traffic and circulation of the necessaries of life, would have been obstructed to the public prejudice. Indeed there are few general advantages without the alloy of some partial or temporary disadvantage; and this may be considered as falling under that description. Compleat redress therefore can hardly be expected; and those who are unhappily in this manner inconvenienced, should endeavour to draw some comfort from reflecting, that so large a portion of their fellow-creatures may be benefited, even at their expence; that daily evidence of its success may gradually remove their doubts, and encourage them to experience its safety and propriety. But whatever alleviations charitable and pious minds may suggest to themselves, this nuisance certainly demands restraint; and it is the indispensable duty

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of those, who for profit, or any other reason, thus molest their neighbour, to consider, how grossly they misuse this beneficial discovery, and interrupt the progress of it. As, in fact, in some countries this management has created no inconsiderable objection to the permission of it. The inhumanity of such behaviour is too plain; to suffer their patients, in every stage of the disorder, to range at large in the most frequented places, must occasion great anxiety, much mischief, and has often been followed with the severest family distress. It is an aggravation of this heinous offence, that it is totally without excuse. So dangerous a permission can have no relation to the cure. Decent precautions, dictated by the common principles of good-nature, cannot, ought not, to be set aside. They have no right to slight them; they deserve severe animadversion for such neglect. The practice is, no doubt, indebted to some of the more intelligent of these bold adventurers for useful hints, which the judicious and authorised physician would not have been permitted to introduce. But those of them who go these lengths, more than compensate for such improvements, and indeed often do as much mischief from their ignorant presumption, as from their unfeeling indifference. By engaging

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in this business in a wholesale way, with scarcely any requisite of judgment or knowledge, the peace, the health, the lives of many individuals have been destroyed. Unseasonable opportunities of communicating the infection, matter ill-chosen for the operation, unskilful management during and after the illness, have entailed disorders upon the constitution which no care or skill could afterwards set right. Several instances of the truth of this might be given, and other hospitals might be appealed to for the patients with which this dangerous practice has furnished them.

To save many poor and useful members of the community from the fatal ravage of this distemper in its natural virulence; and also, from the mischievous abuses of the providential method now adopted to abate the power of it; are the worthy objects of the Charity at this moment a petitioner for your bounty. It is calculated to receive those against whom every other door is prudentially shut. It is not therefore a necessary appendage to the many other noble monuments of truly christian benevolence, which do so much honour to this age and nation. It is also its intention to impart to the necessitous that gift of heaven, (to be received with

thankfulness, and managed with discretion) which prepares and carries them through it with care and skill, without expence, with less hazard of subsequent ill-effects, and with every precaution that the security or ease of individuals may not be endangered. Can any scheme of a benevolent nature be more important or engaging?

For this humane and doubly advantageous foundation we are indebted to the piety and publick spirit of those who felt for the want of it, some years since; and whose philosophic and enlarged cast of mind candidly examined the principles on which inoculation stood; and proved its merit by attentive experiment. Their laudable but imperfect efforts succeeding generosity has considerably extended. The present general approbation has stamped an honourable character on their opinions; and that benevolent disposition which is so characteristic of these times will, it is to be presumed, give strength and permanency to the institution begun by them. Experience has now proved its great importance. From the register of admission, it appears to have received in the course of last year, 334 patients in the natural illness, which makes the whole number of these from

1746 (the year of its establishment) amount to 11056; and of those inoculated, the last year's admission, is 610, in all since the foundation of it (*i. e.* 27 years) 9268; of both together, 20,324.

The reflections naturally resulting from such evidences of its extensive use, and general approbation, cannot but impart a heart-felt pleasure to those whose liberality has been so useful and so comprehensive; as well as to those whose attention and skill have been thus humanely and successfully exerted. Above all, it should impress the strongest sense of gratitude on the minds of all who have reaped the benefits of this united labour, in their service to God, whose holy spirit dictates every worthy sentiment, and to their fellow creatures, who have invited, and cherished such holy influence.

On this review of your past conduct it would be inconsistent, it would be unfair, to doubt of your perseverance in it. The same pious and generous zeal must still animate a people so justly famous for public munificence. To judge from the astonishing, not to say alarming encrease, of every species of expensive luxury, the ability to contribute is not lessened, and from the nature of the charity now before

us, objects for it can never fail. But as the established fund is far inferior to the demands upon it, and has moreover been charged of late with heavy, but necessary expence, it is proper, it is expedient, that at the same time you are informed of the conduct and condition of it, you should also be reminded of those accustomed annual contributions which nourish and support it. The affluent amongst us often feel the comforts which flow from the means their situation gives them, of acquiring proper attention to themselves and families, when visited with this disorder; or of providing this regular security against it. If that is so, can any one refuse some share of compassion for others, in like circumstances, who have not the same ability? This country, ever foremost to encourage useful and ingenious hints, was amongst the first to listen after, and adopt, the practice of inoculation. Our example and experience have been approved and sought for by other nations; and the writings and persons of our most skilful practitioners have been received amongst them, with the highest honour and respect. Perseverance therefore in this good work can require but few words to recommend it. Many have, and no doubt will, contribute largely to it

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on this occasion. Every one may do something, and where the benefits are so conspicuous, should do it in proportion to his means. To *beal the sick*, to compassionate the distresses of mankind, to deal out his charity in the same free and unsparing measure, with which providence has poured its blessings upon us, is real patriotism, substantial Christianity. It is the virtue inculcated by our Saviour himself in my text, and upon which his whole life and conversation was an unvaried comment. It is declared that *charity*, in the largest sense, *shall cover a multitude of sins*. * God knows how many we have to cover, (may their number lessen) I should rather say to be repented of; for no obscurity, no veil, can hide them from his all-discerning Eye; nor will any single virtue, however industriously cultivated (not even this which is so comprehensive) atone for defects in that perfect character, which we are commanded to aspire after.

* 1 Pet. 4. 8.

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